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ing Americans can thus play their part in the household affairs of France.

A Frenchman of distinction, L. Chevrillon, French member of the Belgian Relief Commission, in interpreting the work of the American Red Cross to his fellow countrymen, said:

Above all, the work of the American Red Cross should intensify the natural current of sympathy which exists between France and America. . . .

It should be an institution not conducted merely from the point of view of intelligent relief or of proper management, but it should be also a great work of inter-penetration of the two nationalities. . . .

Taking into account the fact that France has had to sacrifice to military necessities and has had therefore to give secondary consideration to the relief of war sufferings, it will help with its capital, its men, its personnel, with the ability of its technical advisers and with the work of all its staff, all those institutions which have not been able to come to a complete development in the midst of the universal drama, which has brought them into being. It will hasten the solution of certain problems which appear to the French minds as still far distant. It will busy itself with the needs of orphans, children, the tuberculous, "refugees," "repatries." It will study the great problems of after-the-war, such as depopulation, rehabilitation of households, reconstitution of devastated areas, and in a general way will do its best to prepare a thorough and rapid renaissance of all the vital forces of the country.

BELGIUM AND THE RED CROSS—A PARTNERSHIP

By ERNEST P. BICKNELL,

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The Commission for Belgium, of the American Red Cross, has its headquarters at Sainte-Adresse, a suburb of Havre, France, which is the seat of the Belgian Government. The work of the commission is not limited by geographical lines, but is intended to assist Belgians, both military and civilian, wherever they are in need, either within free Belgium or in allied countries or neutral countries. It is to be recalled that the greater part of Belgium is held by the Germans, but that approximately 600,000 citizens of Belgium are refugees in England, France, Holland and Switzerland, where they are entirely cut off from home and from their ordinary and normal environment, resources, laws, customs and associates. These unhappy people are very widely dispersed in the countries

named and are gathered in groups ranging from a score or so in small villages to aggregations amounting to approximately 70,000 in Paris, probably as many in London, and perhaps 30,000 in Havre.

The Belgian government itself is established in an alien land, its usual revenues entirely cut off, and dependent wholly upon money loaned to it by its Allies. Many necessary services which would be provided by the government in the case of any of the other Allies, the Belgian Government cannot provide for its people because of a lack of resources and a lack of facilities to solve the problems of food and clothing, transportation, hospital service, and the care of children.

It should be added that besides the 600,000 Belgian refugees in alien countries, there remain in the small corner of Belgium still unconquered, a population of approximately 75,000 persons who live under conditions of extreme difficulty and constant peril as they are at all times within reach of the enemy's guns and are subject to bombardment by enemy aviators.

For the purpose of this summary, the work of the Commission for Belgium will be classified by headings.

MILITARY HOSPITALS

It has been necessary for Belgium to send a large proportion of her sick and wounded soldiers for care into French hospitals. She has, however, maintained a number of hospitals under the direct charge of the sanitary service of her army or of her Red Cross society. The American Red Cross has assisted the Belgian hospitals in gifts of important electrical apparatus, surgical equipment, halls of recreation for the hospital patients, water and bathing installations, hospital supplies, games, amusements, etc. In the instance of the Belgian Red Cross hospital at Wulveringham, the Commission for Belgium has contributed largely to the construction of a new hospital which the Belgian Red Cross was unable to complete from its own funds.

The military hospitals which the Commission for Belgium has aided are, in Belgium: La Panne, Wulveringham, Beveren, Hoogstadt and Cabour; in France: Le Havre, Aberville, Angerville, Mortain, Rouen, Port-Villez, Sainte-Adresse and Montpellier. These hospitals accommodate a total of approximately 9,000 patients.

Advanced surgical posts almost in the front line trenches are now being provided for the instant care of those suffering from wounds which cannot bear transportation to hospitals. Necessary surgical equipment for first line surgeons is also being provided on an extensive scale.

WELFARE WORK FOR SOLDIERS

Work for soldiers, not in hospitals, is restricted to those behind the lines who have been sent back to recuperate from the hardships of the trenches or are convalescent from wounds or illness or are stationed on lines of communication.

The Belgian Army is cut off from its own country. The families of most of the soldiers are in occupied Belgium. The soldiers, in many thousands of instances, have had no word from their families for more than three years. When they get permission to leave the front for a short rest, they cannot go home, but must go among strangers who, in many instances, do not understand their language. Eighty per cent of the army is Flemish.

The Belgian soldier receives pay amounting approximately to nine cents per diem. This does not permit him to accumulate any savings. He cannot pay the expenses involved in going away from the front for rest even when he has permission to do so. The result of this is that thousands of these men have had no furlough since the war began; no chance to get away for a taste of normal life, rest or enjoyment. No fact is more fully recognized than that soldiers must have an occasional opportunity to get away from the monotony and the rigors and privations of life at the front, if they are to retain their spirit and their health.

The American Red Cross is doing what it can to remedy this unhappy situation among the Belgian soldiers. The work of amelioration aims first to make easier the lot of the soldier in active service behind the lines and second to make it possible for the soldiers to take and enjoy the furloughs to which they are entitled from time to time. To make this plain, it should be explained that the soldier's time when on duty is divided into three shifts. He spends a period in the first line trenches, then moves back a short distance, perhaps two or three miles, and spends a second period on intermediate duty ("demi-repos") where he has not a great deal of responsibility but lives very uncomfortably and is subject to

instant call to the trenches in any emergency. Finally he goes further back to quieter places where he remains a few days "en repos" but with large numbers of his fellows and without opportunity to go away alone to visit friends or see new places or enjoy complete quiet and rest. At the end of this third period he again takes his turn in the first line trenches and begins the round all over again. Naturally on occasions of great military activity this routine is interrupted.

In addition to the régime here described, each soldier, once in four months, is entitled to a "permission" (a furlough) of ten days. When on "permission" the soldier is free from all military duty and may go away to visit friends or to rest quietly or even to take temporary employment and earn a little money for his own use or to send to his family. Parenthetically, it is surprising how many of the Belgian soldiers on "permission" seize the opportunity to earn a little money by hard work. Several patriotic agencies devote themselves to finding or providing employment for those who desire it.

The welfare work of the Red Cross is among the soldiers on duty at the front, during the second and third periods of their routine as described above, and for those who need assistance to enable them to take the permissions to which they are entitled and which many of them cannot take without help. Help is also given toward making life more tolerable for soldiers employed at industrial centers, in munitions works, at important seaports, etc.

This attempt to soften the hard conditions under which the Belgian soldier lives, far from his own country and totally severed from his people, takes many forms. For the soldiers at the front it may broadly be divided as follows:

Food, which is supplied through two types of organizations: first, canteens which serve meals and hot drinks at centers where the clientele is constantly changing; second, messes where small regular groups take two meals per diem.

Rest and recreation in the form of reading and writing rooms, recreation barracks and tents, theatrical entertainments and moving pictures, music, libraries both stationary and circulating, educational classes, athletic fields, equipment and contests, games, prizes for excellence in athletics and class work, etc.

Individual gifts to men who have been decorated or have been

cited for especially courageous or meritorious conduct. To every soldier who thus proves his mettle the Red Cross sends a letter of congratulation and a small present as a token of appreciation. Gifts are also given to severely wounded men in hospitals to cheer and comfort them. Substantially 6,000 men a month share in these gifts which include the most varied articles.

For soldiers on "permission" and for soldiers stationed on lines of communication and at munitions centers the work of the Red Cross takes the form of rest homes (usually fine chateaux with spacious grounds and farm lands), comfortable and cheap lodgings in cities with economical restaurants, club rooms provided with reading matter, writing materials, games, theatrical entertainment, assembly halls for lectures, concerts, etc., and in some instances a small sum in cash for pocket money while resting.

The plants or establishments of a fixed character through which the Red Cross works number thirty-two at this writing (June 22), and the number of Belgian soldiers who are using them will average something over 25,000 each day. This does not include an extensive system of recreation tents and canteens attached to the soldiers' cantonments and billets for the use of the men on intermediate military duty (the second period of the three described earlier in this article). These tents and canteens, maintained by the Red Cross, are moved about with the shifting of troops and camps. They number not fewer than fifty and provide entertainment and refreshment for probably 30,000 men daily.

It may be of interest to speak somewhat more specifically of a few helpful activities which have given great satisfaction to the Belgian soldiers.

Athletic competitions. This work, which stimulates the soldiers physically and mentally, is of increasing importance. As a preliminary to both large and small competitions, the prizes are sent on and exhibited. In the larger or regimental competitions, a very large proportion of the men enter, at least 2,000 taking part per regiment. Among the events are football, "balle-pelote," rifle and machine-gun shooting and foot races. There are also company competitions, and companies as well as clubs and rest stations are fitted out with athletic goods.

Books. The library system is very complete. There are two large central libraries which have a wide selection for the soldiers

"en repos." There are also 800 cases of 100 books each—a case for each battery or company—for men on intermediate duty ("en demi-repos"). The two large libraries are supplemented by the *Livre du Soldat Belge*, a society supported by the American Red Cross which supplies every soldier with a book which he chooses himself and keeps as his own. If he wishes to change it, it goes into one of the two large libraries, and the society buys him another book which he may select. This comprehensive scheme supplies the men "en repos" with a very large choice of books; those on duty, but with some spare time, with a selection of 100; and the man in the trenches with a book in his pocket which is his own property. Probably 30,000 books are out of these libraries if not actually being read every day. A large proportion of them are technical in character.

Entertainments. The Red Cross pays expenses, with the exception of board and transportation, of the companies of actors and musicians who are sent to give entertainments to the soldiers at the front. Several hundred men are entertained every day by each troupe.

Cinemas are operating in ten centers, delighting thousands daily. More are being installed as occasion offers. The Red Cross not only pays for the plant, but helps to rent films and meet operating expenses.

Phonographs, after cinemas, are the most popular source of amusement, and over forty have already been supplied to the smaller centers.

Educational program. A large and valuable educational work carried on through the "*Belgische Standaard*" is subsidized by the Red Cross. Sixteen reading rooms are maintained in free Belgium and Northern France, special dramatic and literary libraries have been formed, and stereopticon lectures are provided. The educational work in the narrower sense of the term is divided into primary courses (5,000 students), which are given directly. Correspondence courses prepare pupils for state examinations (1,200 pupils), and for professional work (650 students), including mechanics, metallurgy, wood-working and type-setting. Art is encouraged by exhibitions and 800 men are studying philosophy and theology. Thus, 7,650 students are regularly enrolled. The committee not only supplies teachers and courses, but paper, pens, books, etc., and

in addition, does welfare work by distributing tobacco, soap, footballs, accordions, chocolate, cards, and writing-paper.

ASSISTANCE TO NURSES

Belgian nurses in military hospitals receive compensation at the rate of seven francs a day. From this pay five francs a day is deducted to cover the cost of room and food. The nurse therefore has two francs a day from which to pay for clothing and all incidental and personal expenses. Like the Belgian soldier, the nurse cannot save money enough to take her away from the hospital for a rest and vacation when her opportunity comes; nor can the worn-out or convalescent nurse afford the period of rest and extra diet which her condition demands.

The commission has undertaken to maintain a small convalescent home in which nurses suffering from overstrain or who are recovering from illness may find a few weeks of rest and quiet and good food amidst agreeable surroundings. The commission has also made it possible for every nurse to take her vacation when her turn comes, by giving her a small cash grant sufficient to meet her necessary expenses. This arrangement applies to 600 nurses.

CIVILIAN HOSPITALS

In time of war the health of the civil population has a direct relation to the health of the army. This is doubly true as regards the civil population in the midst of which the army is operating and has its encampments and its billets. An epidemic of a comparatively harmless disease among the civilians of a village may spread to an army with disastrous results.

Apart then from the humanitarian and economic aspects of the problem of health conservation among the civil population, there is, in the allied countries of Europe today, the additional duty of protection for our armies. Tuberculosis, typhoid, diphtheria, pneumonia, smallpox, measles, mumps,—the whole familiar list,—have a multiplied horror when their effect upon an army is contemplated. And when contagious disease appears in an army it has usually had its beginning among the civil population.

Belgian civilians who have taken refuge in neighboring countries are thus separated from the hospitals and physicians and other guards to health to which they have been accustomed. They do not

know the language or the laws or the provisions for health protection in the countries in which they now find themselves. They have great difficulty in finding healthful living accommodations, especially in cities. Their resources are gone and they are compelled to pay high prices for wretched living rooms while they find it difficult to provide enough nourishing food for their families. The complete uprooting of these ultra-conservative, home-loving people, their bewilderment, their separation from friends, the necessity of adjusting themselves to unfamiliar occupations—all these facts and others tend to break down morale and to create conditions unfavorable to health.

One method by which the Red Cross is helping the Belgian people in exile is by coöperating with them in the establishment of civil hospitals at strategic points when such institutions are not already available. Nine such hospitals have now been established, with a combined capacity for about 2,000 patients. This work is being extended as opportunity offers.

CARE OF CHILDREN

The lot of Belgian children is peculiarly hard. Their families refugees, and their fathers in the army, the means of giving them proper care have been reduced to a minimum. Especially in the small section of Belgium still free, the children have been subjected to great hardship and constant danger. While it is sad to see men wounded by shell and bomb, it is still more tragic and pathetic to find little children torn and mangled by the shells and bombs which the enemy has thrown upon Belgian territory. Many children and mothers have been killed and many others wounded. Especial efforts have been made to rescue as many as possible of these children from the dangerous and difficult position which they occupy in Belgium.

The work in behalf of Belgian children undertaken by the Commission for Belgium, follows four lines:

- a. Evacuation from zones of gas and shell attack.
- b. Evacuation from the semi-famine conditions in occupied Belgium.
- c. Baby-saving work in congested refugee centers.
- d. Baby-saving work at the front.

The Belgian Government, through the Minister of the In-

terior, has evacuated over 8,000 children from places of danger in free Belgium, and is caring for them in school colonies in old Normandy, along the coast from Calais to Dieppe and in Southern France. This burden long ago became too heavy for the Minister to bear, and the Commission for Belgium has therefore been helping during the past ten months. It has provided buildings, clothing, blankets, shoes, extra food, games, sewing machines, books, tools, cows, etc.

The Queen of Belgium has been active and generous in the rescue of children at the front, and the Commission for Belgium has built an additional pavilion for her colony at Vinckem to care for very young children. The evacuation of children from occupied Belgium likewise has been undertaken under the leadership of the Queen. The children on arriving do not look emaciated, but are undernourished, and in many instances suffer from rickets and lack stamina. Especially children from four to eight years old have suffered severely. In the lovely hill country of Correze, France, at Le Glandier, was found an old Carthusian monastery which the Commission for Belgium has turned into a beautiful home for 750 children from the eastern part of Belgium. Four other suitable locations in great country chateaux and monasteries have been obtained in Southern France, and the children are coming in through Germany and Switzerland to fill them. Eventually the number of children in this group of colonies will reach 2,000 or more. Children from occupied Belgium are also coming to colonies under the Minister of the Interior aided by the commission.

Almost from the beginning of the war Switzerland has been a place of refuge for children from Belgium. Generous and sympathetic Swiss people formed committees and organized to receive and care for these children, some of which came from free Belgium, fleeing before the advancing Germans and some from occupied Belgium behind the German lines. In 1916, the Rockefeller Foundation undertook the support of 500 of these children. Later the supervision of this effort, by arrangement with the foundation, was assumed by the Commission for Belgium of the Red Cross. The commission has extended its work in Switzerland to partial support of the Belgian children not included in the foundation's group of colonies. The total number of these children now under care in Switzerland is approximately 2,000.

Holland, first of all the neighboring countries to open its arms to the refugees from Belgium, has never faltered in the hospitality which government and people extended in those terrible days of panic and flight. But the people of Holland have themselves suffered bitter hardship as the war has progressed. The societies and committees organized to help refugees have found their resources dwindling while the cost of food and clothing and shelter has steadily increased. The Red Cross Commission for Belgium has undertaken to assist somewhat in bearing the burden of these agencies. It is helping especially in the care of children, by contributing to the funds of the societies in charge of them. The organizations to which financial help is now being given have permanent responsibility for more than 2,000 children, while giving temporary care annually to about 5,000.

Summarizing this work for Belgian children, it may be stated that the total number of children under colony care at this time is about 15,000 distributed among eighty-five colonies in France, free Belgium, Switzerland and Holland. In every colony, especial emphasis is laid upon health and education. Every colony has its regularly organized schools, taught by Belgian teachers under the general direction of the Minister of Sciences and Arts of the Belgian Government. With few exceptions, the colonies are in the open country where opportunities for play and work in the open air are all that could be desired. And in every colony also, provision has been made for the moral and religious instruction of the children.

At Havre, where the Belgian population is 30,000, and housing conditions are very bad, the commission has established a health center containing a children's dispensary, a crèche, and a maternity hospital, as the beginning of a campaign to save Belgian babies. From this center, doctors and nurses visit the children in their homes and teach mothers how to care for sick babies. Special diet and necessary clothing are also provided. Several thousand children are treated in this center every month.

At the front, where armies crowd every little Flemish village, seize the food, and cause inevitable disarrangement and demoralization, the mortality among babies is high. In coöperation with the proper authorities, the commission is gradually extending among the civilian population near the front, a system of care for babies which includes dispensary service and consultation with mothers,

home visiting, milk distribution and hospital care. At various points, also, crèches have been created for the care of babies whose mothers must work in munitions factories and other industries. Steadily, if the plans of the commission are not interrupted, it is intended to expand the provision for children, for in no other way is it possible to give service of greater importance to the Belgian nation than by the preservation of the lives of those on whom the nation's future depends.

REFUGEES

Problems which are confronted by the Belgian refugees are those of transportation, housing, food and clothing, medical care and employment. The able-bodied have little difficulty in obtaining employment, but it is always to be emphasized that a large proportion of the refugees are incapable of hard, steady work. The vigorous men are in the army. The younger women are usually the mothers of small children. A majority of the refugees are old men and women, mothers with children, and the sick or otherwise physically disabled.

In all parts of France, England, and Holland, these refugees are to be found. As the chief exodus from Belgium occurred in the first months of the war, most of them have become settled in the communities into which they were distributed at that time. Some have moved to points where employment was more available. It may be said that a majority of the refugees have solved their own problems and have assumed full responsibility for their own lives. Many have found self-support in munitions factories, or on farms or roads or as domestic servants. Ordinarily the Belgians in any community have come to form a sort of national colony with their own priests, their own relief committees and often their own schools and doctors. Recent military offensives, however, have driven other thousands into exile from free Belgium, while a varying number, forced out in earlier evacuations, have failed to get settled, and move from place to place. Thus there are always problems of transportation and readjustment to be solved.

Problems of health, ever present, require constant attention. Under the head of "Civilian Hospitals" the subject of health has been briefly discussed. It may be added here that a majority of the doctors and nurses of all the European allied countries have been

absorbed by the armies and that civilians find great difficulty in procuring proper medical attention. On the other hand, the importance of adequate medical care is increased, because the congestion of population in those centers into which refugees have crowded has accentuated the dangers from a lack of sanitation. War conditions have also decreased the supplies of wholesome foods and proper clothing while greatly augmenting their cost.

The Commission for Belgium of the Red Cross has attempted to enter into the lives of the refugee colonies sympathetically but wholly without ostentation. Particular care has been taken to respect the activities, customs, and institutions which the colonies have established during their years of exile. The Red Cross endeavors to avoid upsetting or confusing any local situation. It carries on its work through the agencies which the Belgians themselves have set up, supplementing their activities by means of money or relief supplies or friendly counsel. It acts always in coöperation with the governmental authorities whether local or national. Whenever and wherever a helpful work needs to be done and the Belgian agencies are unable to do it through their own resources, the Red Cross endeavors to step in quietly and lend a helping hand. A few concrete instances will illustrate the character of the work of the Red Cross in this connection, perhaps better than a more general description.

Evacuation of refugees. This is made necessary by every advance or withdrawal of the armies at the front. Generally these movements of armies find the civil populations who are occupying the territory involved, quite unprepared for departure. The people cling to their homes always in the hope that nothing will happen to force them away. Then when the necessity comes it allows no deliberation or study of a plan of action; the people must fly at once, taking with them such small articles as can be carried on their backs or trundled in wheelbarrows or handcarts. Occasionally a horse or an ox is available with a cart to take away some of the household goods. It is a time of breaking the bonds of a lifetime and abandoning treasured possessions, of hasty farewells, of confusion and bewilderment.

The people are instructed that they are to go at once to some designated point on the nearest railway line. There they are gathered together with their bundles and when enough have arrived to

make a trainload, a long line of box cars is shunted to a siding and the people are crowded on board with their belongings. They do not know how long they are to be on board the cars nor are they aware of their destination. The train moves away, travelling slowly, delayed by the necessity for keeping the tracks clear for military trains. The discomfort and the fatigue of such travel as this, when it extends into several days and nights without the opportunity for rest, constitute a very heavy tax upon the strength and endurance of the refugees. The sufferings of the sick and those weak and frail because of age or infancy, become intense. Death has not infrequently occurred on these refugee trains. There have been instances of entire trainloads of people being without food for a whole day or even more. These hardships are not the results of carelessness or indifference, but are an inevitable product of the military situation.

The Red Cross has been of some assistance in softening the distress and hardship of these evacuations. Along the Flanders front it has provided large motor-trucks, which have worked at top speed day and night removing the refugees from their places of danger to designated railway stations. Ambulances have carried the sick. Food supplies and clothing have been provided at the assembly points on the railroad; supplies of food, with doctors, interpreters, and nurses, have been put on board the trains on their departure. Within the period from the middle of March to the middle of April, it is probable that 30,000 refugees from this small part of the front were thus sent away in trains to distant places of safety. The Red Cross was, of course, not alone in this work: the representatives of the Belgian and French governments were active, and an ambulance unit of English Quakers gave most efficient service. This ambulance unit and the Red Cross worked as a single agency, all the ambulances and motor-trucks of both organizations being directed by a single head.

The Red Cross has provided clothing and food for these refugees upon reaching their destinations and at stopping points en route. While the movement of refugees is spasmodic and dependent upon military operations in general, there is, at the same time, a small but continuous movement of those who day by day are giving up the struggle for existence near the front. It is to be remembered that the areas behind the lines for a distance of many miles are al-

ways subject to aeroplane bombardment. Great destruction of lives and property has resulted in hundreds of communities from this cause. People at first think they can remain in spite of these bombardments but gradually the danger becomes more obvious, neighbors and friends are killed or injured, and their homes destroyed. Eventually, the constant menace overcomes the love of home and the desire to protect property, and the people gather together a few belongings and start in search of places of security among strangers. This steady movement is more easily controlled by the authorities, but there are always demands for assistance in the form of food and clothing and direction.

Shelter. Refugees from Belgium and the invaded part of France, repatriates from invaded France, and refugees from the areas near the fighting line have poured into those parts of France which are remote from danger, to the total number of probably 2,000,000 persons. This great body of homeless people has created an extremely acute housing problem in many cities. It is especially difficult for families with young children to find suitable accommodations, and this is particularly true of Belgian families, in part because these families are likely to be large, and in part because many of the Belgians do not speak French.

The Belgian Government and Belgian private agencies have made great efforts to provide shelter for their refugees, and, in this, the French authorities have coöperated most generously. Vacant monasteries, unoccupied chateaux, summer hotels, unused schools and groups of temporary barracks erected for the purpose have been utilized. The Red Cross has found an opportunity to assist in meeting the demand for shelter by providing furnishings for unfurnished buildings, by supplying food and clothing, and by the erection of barracks.

In the city of Havre, where many Belgian refugees are occupying dark, noisome and most unhealthful rooms, where frequently families of from four to eight persons occupy a single room, the Commission for Belgium has undertaken a building project which is not without interest. A tract of land, agreeably situated on a small hill in the outskirts of the city was taken, and a village of small cottages is now being erected. The ground had previously been provided with paved streets, while lines of water-mains and electric wires are conveniently near. This village will consist of one hundred

cottages, each of three or four rooms. At the rear of each cottage will be a small shed to be used as laundry and storage space. Each cottage will have a small garden plot and will be enclosed by a neat rustic fence. Electric light will be provided, and in the center of the village will be a public water supply. Two schoolhouses will meet the needs of the children, and a coöperative store, which is a familiar and successful institution among the Belgians, will be established in its own quarters. A central building will provide administrative headquarters for the village, and a meeting place for the people on all occasions.

The population of the village will consist of families selected from the worst quarters of the city, but no family which has less than four children will be granted a cottage in the village. The cottages will be rented fully furnished for thirty francs (six dollars) per month. If any occupant of the village cannot pay the rent, the payment will be made from some charitable source, but no cottage will be given gratuitously. The income from the rent of the one hundred cottages will meet all the expenses of keeping up the streets, attending to the plumbing, lighting, cleaning, repairs, etc.

This village which, at this writing, is well on toward completion, will be like a transplanted bit of Belgium. Not only will the people be Belgian, but the schools will be Belgian taught by Belgian teachers. A Belgian priest will look after the moral welfare of the people, and Belgians will have charge of the administration. When the war is ended, the cottages, which are all of the demountable type, may be taken down and shipped into Belgium, there to be set up again in some of the destroyed towns of that unhappy country.

Food and clothing. The distribution of food and clothing, as already stated, has been carried on chiefly through the established relief agencies of the Belgian people themselves, in their refugee colonies and through certain general, governmental and private organizations. This work has been widespread, extending into scores of communities and reaching many thousand persons.

A stock of food and clothing has been established near the front especially for the assistance of the civilians affected by military operations, and at the clearing houses near the front where the dislocated people are cared for temporarily, pending their despatch to safer regions. These clearing houses have been erected by the

Red Cross and several hundred persons are at all times to be found in them.

Clothing for discharged soldiers. Soldiers who are discharged from service because of disability, immediately become civilian—they are no longer permitted to wear the military uniform. Large numbers of them have no means with which to buy civilian clothing, and as they have been in the service for several years, they have not been able to preserve such civilian apparel as they possessed before the war. A very real need has been shown to exist for assistance to these men and the Commission for Belgium has accordingly undertaken to provide necessary civilian clothes for men who are not able to obtain such articles for themselves. The number of men thus provided with clothing by the Red Cross amounts to approximately 300 per month.

Miscellaneous activities. It is unnecessary to outline further the character or variety of the work of the Red Cross for refugees, although the range of effort continually expands, and the work which today is unimportant may tomorrow become vital. The Red Cross has encouraged, by money and advice, the establishment of workrooms in which refugees may be given self-supporting employment. It has assisted in the support of centers of social service and recreation; it has assisted in the establishment and maintenance of health centers; it has provided for the distribution of milk for children in many places in which milk is difficult to obtain; it has helped in controlling epidemics of disease; it has made possible the provision of supplies of pure water, and has provided bathing facilities and other means of health and cleanliness. It is unnecessary to prolong this list which might be much extended. It will be enough to say that the Commission for Belgium of the Red Cross has always kept its organization so elastic that it can extend its help to any urgent need, whether it be large or small, which affects the welfare of the Belgian refugees.

BELGIAN COÖPERATION

From the beginning the Commission for Belgium has acted on the principle that the Belgian governmental authorities and the Belgian leaders in private life are better prepared to administer the relief activities necessary to the interests of their people. Adhering to this principle, the Red Cross has avoided setting up ad-

ministrative relief units of its own. It says in substance to the Belgian authorities and leaders:

Yours is the chief responsibility; you know your people, their language, their customs, their needs, their habits of thought; this knowledge is essential to the wisest and most effective conduct of relief operations. The American Red Cross does not possess this knowledge, nor can it relieve you of your responsibility to your own; therefore, the Red Cross will not replace you or assume your duties of administration, but it wishes to establish sympathetic and cordial relations with you, to be a partner with you in all these works, to advise with you, and to help you bear the load wherever it becomes too great for your strength or resources.

The response of the Belgian leaders to this proposal of the Red Cross has been wholehearted, prompt, and complete. A coöperative relationship has grown up between the commission and the government through which the commission is in constant and cordial communication with the several ministers composing the government. Daily personal contact between the ministers and the representatives of the Red Cross have simplified and expedited all operations and activities. Any request or suggestion from a minister or from the Red Cross is communicated instantly and informally by personal conference, conclusions are quickly reached and followed promptly by whatever action is requisite.

I cannot permit myself to close this article without paying a tribute to the courage, the coöperative spirit, and the fine sense of responsibility on the part of the leaders of the Belgian people, whether in official or in private life, as we have learned to know them through a year of close and constant contact. To them and not to the staff of the Commission for Belgium is chiefly due the credit for whatever measure of success the commission has achieved.